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SELF-DETERMINATION HAVING A HARD TIME

THE PRINCIPLE of the right of self-determination is not dead. We are in receipt of an article, entitled "Das Recht der Minderheiten," by Von Johannes Tiedje, of Berlin, in which he develops with measured reasoning the proposition that the right of self-determination in territories taken from Germany is and can be the only guarantee of any future peace in Europe. The Council of the League of Nations has, in our judgment, done violence to this principle in a number of ways, particularly with reference to the disposition of Eupen and Malmedy. Under Article 34 of the Paris Peace Treaty, it is the duty of the League to decide whether the transfer to Belgium of the sovereignty of Germany over the districts of Eupen and Malmedy shall be final. Under the terms of the treaty, the League must decide the question after the Belgian Government has communicated to it the result of the public expression of opinion held under the auspices of the Belgian authorities and designed to give to the people of the districts an opportunity to record their desire to remain under German sovereignty. Such a situation is indefensible.

The German Government has addressed to the President of the Supreme Council and to the Secretary General of the League of Nations a series of protests that the Belgian Government was making it impossible for the people of Eupen and Malmedy freely to register their wishes, the German Government proposing that a commission be appointed by the League of Nations to supervise the consultation of the people in those districts. The Council of the League has taken the position that it has no right under the treaty to interfere in Eupen and Malmedy "until the Belgian Government has communicated the result of the public expression of opinion and until the interval of six months prescribed by the treaty had elapsed." The Council has decided that Belgium, however, "definitely confirmed the transfer of the districts to the sovereignty of Belgium." The German Government has protested against this decision, denying the competency of the Council to deal with the matter. The Council has confirmed its competency in the premises; but when the German Government protested regarding the alleged breach of the Treaty of Versailles because of the action of the "Delimitative Commission," charged with fixing the frontier between Germany and Belgium, the Council has held that it is not competent to take action in the matter. Behavior such as this, calculated to promote ill-will and hatred, is characteristic of any purely political international organization such as is this League of Nations.

Thus it is a constant source of irritation and danger. The right of self-determination is a peace principle. The League of Nations, under its present form of organization, exists for the defense and perpetuity of numberless war principles. The two are twain and never, never can meet.

FREEDOM TO COMMUNICATE

INTERNATIONALISM, in the best sense of that word, is only possible at its maximum of efficiency and power when there is equal facility, fullness, and accuracy of transmission of news and of opinion.

When this problem is studied from the intercontinental aspect, it at once becomes obvious that on the technical side the case rests on ownership, operation, and motivation in use of the cable and radio systems of communication. They are costly to build and maintain and, of necessity, are relatively few in number. Control of these means of communication during the World War, so far as the Allies were concerned, naturally came, in the course of time, to be a war function; and such cables and radio systems as were owned and operated by Germany were early seized by the Allies.

With the close of the war, there came the necessity of settling formally the distribution of the cable systems taken from Germany, and also the need of laying down, if possible, some general principles or code by which all the governments should in due time govern their peace control of the arteries of the world's communication service. Under the terms of the Paris Treaty, steps were taken to solve this problem, and discussion of a preliminary sort has been going on in Washington, by commissioners from Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States, since October. On another page we make comment on some of the aspects of the problem on its news side.

Even had there been no evidence prior to the 1914-1918 war as to the highly strategical importance of solution of this issue, it would have clamored for discussion and action. But the experiences of the war made the situation acute. A controlled cable or radio line may, and in fact does, become a potential or an actual weapon of offense or defense to any nation with title to operate it exclusively and with power to defend that title. It is a power that in times of peace as well as during formal military war can be used to cripple the trade, misinform the press, and hamper the diplomacy of a rival nation. A cable or a radio line can be, has been, and even now is being used for the most narrow nationalistic purposes. Without agreement between nations as to ethics of management of lines of news com-

munication and without definition of the mutual rights of would-be users of these agencies, it may soon come to pass that a denial of mutual rights may be the cause of war or of an alliance calculated to cripple in an economic and industrial way the recalcitrant and selfish nation operating for monopolistic ends a given cable or radio line.

The United States at the present time is making a stiff fight for recognition of the principle of mutuality. If it is defeated, it will harden its heart against powers that defeat its purpose, and it will start in to construct its own intercontinental systems of communication, and in the meantime make it as uncomfortable as possible for nations that wish to use American terminals for cable landings and radio stations. The United States is not asking for any of the spoils taken from Germany, but it does not intend to let the Allies, with whom it fought and who are quite willing to take Germany's former property, turn right round and use the resources put within their power to injure the United States and make it a suppliant for their favor in intercontinental business.

DEFLATION AND ITS PRIVATIONS

SOMETIMES POVERTY, or the threat of it, is a blessing. At last the superwealthy United States is beginning to reef its economic sails, tighten its belt, and count its dollars in terms of thousands, not millions or billions. The "plunging" period is over. The wisest men of the nation are sitting down to see how a panic may be avoided. Inflated values are being punctured by the grim necessities of the hour. Prices to the consumer really are falling now, and producers who are hard hit in the process of deflation and because of inability to sell their goods abroad are squealing in their pain and asking Uncle Sam to carry them to an island of economic safety under his arm. If Uncle Sam is wise, he will not do it.

Feeling thus, legislative appropriations are being studied with unusual care, because State and national treasuries are facing deficits. Severest forms of economies are being recommended by officials who study possible sources of income and who can estimate with some degree of accuracy the costs of the essentials of administration that must go on if the State's bare machinery is to function. The call goes forth for elimination of the luxuries and non-essentials; and it is gratifying to see that in New York State, where Governor Miller hints that he will cut down estimates one billion dollars, they are seriously considering scrapping the year-old scheme of compulsory military education

of the State's male youth. War does not seem so essential an industry as it did while we were in it. As to the demand in Congress for a drastic cutting down of naval and military expenditures, we comment in another column. You cannot eat your cake and have it too. You cannot spend billions and then get prosperity by any other plan than by making good the losses through toil and sacrifice.

CANADA EMERGES

CANADA'S EXPERIENCES during the South African War and the recent war have taught her much. She has stopped at no sacrifice of men or wealth to carry out successfully, on a military scale, combats to which she deemed herself morally pledged by her ties as a loyal daughter. Nevertheless, they were sacrifices caused by policies which she had no part in shaping. They proved her obedience to Downing Street—glad obedience if you please so to term it; but they were based on no previous assent of hers to the imperial policies of Mr. Chamberlain in his day or of Mr. Balfour and Mr. Lloyd-George in their day.

The late war, with its grim horrors, the denudation throughout her sparsely settled territory of her finest youth, the huge increase of the national debt, the ceaseless friction with British officials, military and civilian, and the possible implications of the Dominion in later wars—these things sent to the Paris Peace Conference a group of men determined to assert Canadian nationalism as it never had been asserted before. This, ably led by Sir Robert Borden, they proceeded to do.

At the meeting of the Assembly of the League in Geneva now sitting, they have made it clear again that Canada, as a constituent of the British domain, has ceased to be a daughter and has come rather to be a sister. In other words, they have asserted the Canadian point of view in distinction from the British; they have won a place in the League that has made them independent, and they have taught the English and Scotch, as well as the French and the Italians, that the New World of America has bred another and second variety of Anglo-Celt, differing from the kind bred by generations of residence in the islands off the coast of western Europe or in the United States. Precisely as the Canadian troops fought in their own way, so did the Canadian representatives at Paris, and more recently at Geneva, negotiate in their own way.

We doubt whether there has been a more dramatic and significant moment in latter-day British history than when, at the Geneva Conference, Mr. Balfour and Mr. Fisher, of the British Cabinet, sitting in the Council, had to sit and hear themselves, as representatives of